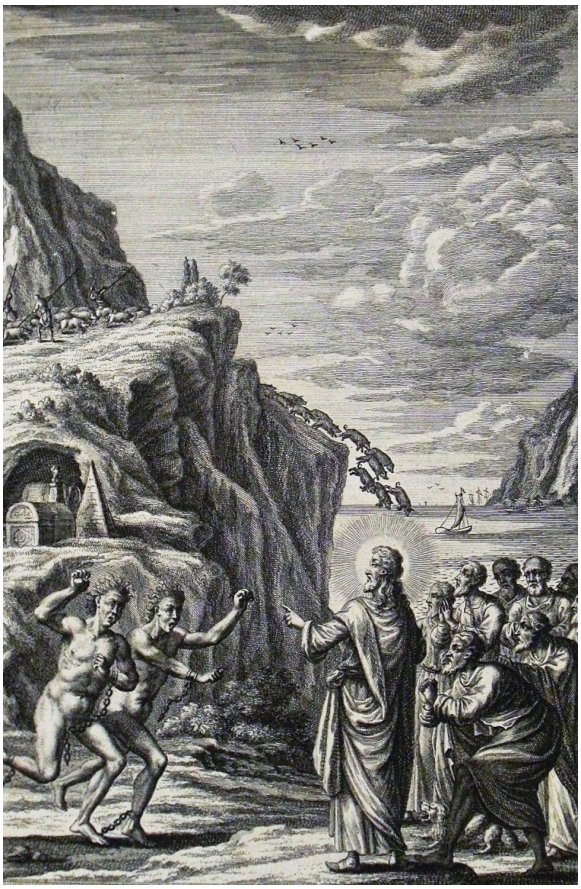

D6. BOWYER BIBLE PRINT 3609. CHRIST SENDS EVIL SPIRITS INTO SWINE PINTZ

By the time Jesus's fame has spread far, and he has a non-Jew going to him and pleading with him to heal her daughter (7:24-30). The woman is from modern Lebanon. It is called Syro-Phoenicia to distinguish it from Libyan Phoenicia, that is Carthage in North Africa. His remark about bread, children and dogs means, "I've come to preach a message to the Jews, the Chosen People of God. They are the children. If I actually help you, I'm giving the food to a dog." Jesus is perhaps not as cruel as he sounds: there were two Greek words for "dog": the one Jesus used - "little dog" (the Greek word is a diminutive) - meant a domesticated dog of the kind that was let in the house, rather than a scavenger. He also qualifies his statement by saying that he must "first" feed the children. But in any case the woman is unperturbed by Jesus's apparent harshness. Jesus is so impressed by her faith that he heals her daughter. That would have been very important to many of Mark's readers, because by the time Mark wrote down his Gospel many non-Jews had become Christians, and they would have taken great comfort in the story. The discussion may have been going on in the Church as to whether non-Jews could actually receive Communion; because when Jesus established the Eucharist it was a Jewish Passover rite. The story may have been shaped to answer that particular question.